

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 1391

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR SOPN DA FR
SUBJ: MFA HOPES CONTRETEMPS WITH FRENCH RESOLVED

REF: COPENHAGEN 1368

1. DANISH TELEVISION LAST NIGHT (FEB 27) AND PRINTED MEDIA TODAY CARRIED DANISH PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN'S CLARIFICATION FROM LOS ANGELES OF HIS NATIONAL PRESS CLUB STATEMENT CONCERNING MITTERRAND AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A VICTORY BY THE FRENCH SOCIAL-ISTS IN THE FRENCH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

2. JORGENSEN SAID THAT HE "CERTAINLY HAD NOT WISHED TO INTERFERE IN DOMESTIC FRENCH AFFAIRS" AND THAT HE HAS ASKED THE DANISH AMBASSADOR IN PARIS TO INFORM THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ACCORDINGLY. IN CHARACTERIZING THE WHOLE MATTER AS A "MISUNDERSTANDING", JORGENSEN ADDED, I DID NOT COMMENT ON WHO MIGHT WIN THE ELECTION IN FRANCE BUT ONLY EXPRESSED MY PERSONAL ESTIMATE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ESSENTIAL CHANGES IN RELATIONS WITH THE EC."

3. JORGSEN WAS ALSO ASKED WHETHER THIS MISUNDERSTANDING MIGHT
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CAUSE HIM IN THE FUTURE TO SPEAK ONLY IN DANISH RATHER THAN ENGLISH. (JORGENSEN'S ENGLISH, WHILE GREATLY IMPROVED OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS, IS STILL BY NO MEANS FLUENT.) JORGENSEN REPLIED: "NO. POLITICAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS CANNOT ALWAYS BE AVOIDED. WE ALL KNOW EXAMPLES OF CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE SAID SOMETHING WHICH COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD."

4. OUR MFA SOURCES INFORM US THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF JORGENSEN'S COMMENTS HAVE BEEN PASSED BY AMBASSADOR FISCHER IN PARIS TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SECRETARY GENERAL JEAN-MARIS SOUTOU. SOUTOU APPARENTLY RESPONDED IN EFFECT THAT JORGENSEN'S CLARIFICATION SHOULD BE SATISFACTORY BUT THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO SPEAK FOR THE ELYSEE. MFA HOPES THAT THE WHOLE THING WILL SUBSIDE AND BE FORGOTTEN BEFORE THE APRIL 7-8 EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING HERE.

5. COMMENT: LAST NIGHT'S DANISH TV EVENING NEWS PROGRAM INCLUDED THE TAPE IN ENGLISH OF JORGENSEN'S REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT AT THE PRESS CLUB TOGETHER WITH A TRANSLATION IN DANISH. ALTHOUGH JORGENSEN MAY NOT HAVE WISHED TO EXPRESS AN OPINION ON THE SUBSTANCE OF WHO SHOULD WIN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS, ONE CAME AWAY FROM HIS REMARKS WITH NO DOUBT THAT HE HAD, IN FACT, SUPPORTED MITTERRAND AND HIS PARTY. END COMMENT

6. CHARGE JUST SPOKE TO MFA POL DIRECTOR BIERRING, WHO HAS BEEN DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN AFFAIR SINCE HIS RETURN FROM US FEB 26. BIERRING SAID HE HAD SPOKEN A NUMBER OF TIMES DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS WITH SEC GEN SOUTOU AND POL DIRECTOR MERILLON AT THE QUAI AND THEY HAD CHARACTERIZED THE FRENCH REACTION AS "TOO HASTY". BIERRING BELIEVES THAT THE PRIMIN'S EXPLANATION IN LOS ANGELES (NOTED ABOVE) HAS HELPED TO SOOTHE THE FRENCH AND THAT RELATIONS CAN BE PUT BACK ON THE TRACK AGAIN. NEVERTHELESS, BIERRING COMMENTED THAT THE AFFAIR WOULD CAST ITS SHADOW OVER THE DANISH CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESIDENCY FOR A FEW WEEKS.
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